

# Soldiers occupy Lithuanian schools; leader fears troops may take over legislature

VILNIUS, U.S.S.R. (AP) — Soviet military commanders Sunday sent soldiers with automatic weapons to occupy two Communist Party schools in Lithuania but later agreed to discuss building security with the breakaway republic.

It was the latest escalation in the war of nerves between the Kremlin and the leadership of this Baltic republic, which declared itself independent March 11.

The commander of all Soviet

ground forces, Gen. Valentin I. Varennikov, accused independence leaders of plotting to arrest Communists and send them to prison.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis said he talked twice on the telephone with Varennikov, whose presence in Vilnius was a sign of Moscow's concern with the situation in the small Baltic republic. The general reportedly said no more buildings would be taken

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overnight but made no promises beyond that.

The soldiers occupied Lithuania's Institute of Marxism-Leninism and the Higher Party School.

The republic's deputy premier, Romualdas Ozolas, said earlier he feared Soviet forces might storm Lithuania's legislative headquarters.

Landsbergis asked for a meeting to receive an explanation about the building seizures, and Varennikov sent four officers to the Lithuanian parliament building.

In a brief news conference afterward, Landsbergis quoted the officers as telling him the buildings had been seized at the request of Communist Party members who remain loyal to Moscow.

"We expressed surprise and astonishment that the military can occupy buildings at the request of a political organization, and we asked if such requests come from other organizations whether they will fulfill them," Landsbergis said. "We did not receive a concrete answer."

Although Varennikov made no promises not to seize more buildings Monday, Landsbergis said the two sides agreed to form a joint committee on control of such buildings. More meetings on the issue were set for Monday morning, he said.

Franciskas Benucius, a director of the Higher Party School, said 30 soldiers who arrived there told him they were sent to guard the building.

"I asked, 'What are you protecting it from?' and they didn't know," he said.

The school is used by both the Lithuanian Communist Party that has broken with Moscow and the smaller group that remains loyal. Officials expected the school to open Monday despite the soldiers' presence.

Despite the increasing tension, there was no sign Sunday that the Soviet army was trying to round up hundreds of Lithuanians who deserted. A deadline of Saturday had been set for their return.

For days, as President Mikhail S. Gorbachev and other Moscow officials have squeezed the defiant

Baltic state, official media reports have criticized a draft bill in Lithuania's new parliament that they say could mean imprisonment for those who speak out against independence.

Varennikov said workers he met with at a Vilnius electronics factory were "convinced that Sajudis is trying to create in the republic a real dictatorship."

Sajudis is the grass-roots political movement that has pressed for Lithuanian independence from the Soviet Union. Its candidates won an absolute majority in the parliament that declared independence, and election commission officials said Sunday it also won a sizeable majority in voting Saturday for the Vilnius city council.

But Varennikov charged Sajudis, headed by Landsbergis, is conducting an "open psychological war against dissidents."

"In conditions of this 'democracy,' many people are frightened," he said in an interview printed Sunday by the newspaper *Sovietskaya Rossiya*, the official newspaper of Lithuania's giant neighbor, the Russian republic.